



## News Release

[www.piercecountywa.org](http://www.piercecountywa.org)

[www.twitter.com/pierceco](http://www.twitter.com/pierceco)

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 3, 2012

## Stage 1 burn ban issued for Pierce County at 4 p.m. today

*[Forwarded in the community interest by the Pierce County Department of Communications]*

To protect public health from rising air pollution levels, the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency is issuing a Stage 1 burn ban in Pierce County, effective at 4 p.m. today. This ban is in effect until further notice.

High pressure has been building over the Puget Sound region, resulting in very cold and stagnant weather conditions. Air pollution is building up in Pierce County, especially in communities where residential wood burning is common. With stagnant conditions expected to continue through tomorrow, pollution levels could reach the "Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups" category at some locations.

Clean Air Agency staff follow a protocol set by state law to determine when and where to issue a burn ban, and when to lift a burn ban.

During a Stage 1 burn ban:

- No burning is allowed in fireplaces or uncertified wood stoves. Residents should rely instead on their home's other, cleaner source of heat (such as their furnace or electric baseboard heaters) for a few days until air quality improves, the public health risk diminishes and the ban is cancelled. The only exception is if a wood stove is a home's only adequate source of heat.
- No outdoor fires are allowed. This includes recreational fires such as bonfires, campfires and the use of fire pits and chimineas. It also includes burning yard waste and storm debris. Pierce County is providing FREE storm debris disposal options.
- Burn ban violations are subject to a \$1,000 penalty.

**It is OK to use natural gas, propane, pellet and EPA certified wood stoves or inserts during a Stage 1 burn ban.**

The Washington State Department of Health recommends that people who are sensitive to air pollution limit time spent outdoors, especially when exercising. Air pollution can trigger asthma attacks, cause difficulty breathing, and make lung and heart problems worse. Air pollution is

especially harmful to people with lung and heart problems, people with diabetes, children, and older adults (over age 65).

The purpose of a burn ban is to reduce the amount of pollution that is creating unhealthy air. Puget Sound Clean Air Agency staff will continue to monitor the situation.

For more information:

- [Updated air pollution data and forecasts](#)
- [Frequently asked questions about burn bans](#)
- How can you tell if your wood stove is certified, and OK to use during a Stage 1 burn ban? Age matters – if the stove is over 20 years old, it is likely uncertified and prohibited for use during a burn ban. Uncertified wood stoves are no longer legal to sell or purchase in the State of Washington due to the significant pollution they generate. A certified stove will have an [EPA label on the back](#).

**MEDIA CONTACTS:**

Amy Warren, Puget Sound Clean Air Agency communications specialist

206-689-4092 or 800-552-3565

[AmyW@pscleanair.org](mailto:AmyW@pscleanair.org)